

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 475

By Bowers

A RESOLUTION to commend Dr. Naomi Geraldine "Gerry" House for her honorable service to the people of Tennessee as Superintendent of the Memphis City Schools.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should recognize those exemplary individuals who dedicate themselves to educating our most important natural resources, our children, and who, through their knowledge, effective skills and love of young people have helped shape the leaders of tomorrow; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Naomi Geraldine "Gerry" House, is one such outstanding person who throughout her exemplary tenure as Superintendent of the Memphis City Schools has distinguished herself as a public-spirited citizen of the highest order and an exceptional asset to her community; and

WHEREAS, after eight years of innovative and meritorious service to Memphis, Dr. House has decided to resign from her post as superintendent in order to continue her commitment to equity and excellence for all children as President and Chief Executive Officer of the Institute for Student Achievement on Long Island, New York; and

WHEREAS, in this most prestigious position, she will be instrumental in perpetuating the highly regarded mission of the Institute to improve the quality of education for all children and youth at risk so that they can succeed in our society; and

WHEREAS, a 1969 graduate of North Carolina A&T State University with a Bachelor of Science degree in English Education, Dr. House holds a Master of Science degree in counseling from Southern Illinois University. She earned her doctorate in Education Administration along with her degree as an Education Specialist at the University of North Carolina, and is also the recipient of an Honorary Doctor of Humanities degree from Rhodes College in Memphis; and

WHEREAS, in stiff competition with many outstanding school superintendents from this state, Gerry House was selected as the 1998-99 Tennessee Superintendent of the Year by the Tennessee Organization of School Superintendents (TOSS) for her extraordinary performance and exceptional contributions to the field of education; and

WHEREAS, selection criteria for both the state and national awards included leadership for learning, communications skills, professional development, and community involvement. Dr. House excelled in all of these areas; she was chosen by a blue ribbon panel of leaders in education, business, and government to represent Tennessee as its outstanding leader; and

WHEREAS, Dr. House was selected for the AASA National Superintendent of the Year award for 1999 from a pool of superintendents representing every state in the nation and two foreign countries, Brazil and Germany; and

WHEREAS, Dr. House is the first Tennessean as well as the first African American woman to receive this prestigious award. She is also the first woman to be named Tennessee Superintendent of the Year; and

WHEREAS, as the superintendent of the largest school system in Tennessee and the 20<sup>th</sup> largest school system in the nation, Dr. House has been instrumental in getting all schools

into the system, making Memphis City Schools one of the few systems in Tennessee in which all schools are fully accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools; and

WHEREAS, nationally known as a leader in school reform, Dr. House has stressed standards, accountability, and teacher training to improve education in Memphis. Extended learning opportunities are also offered before and after school to help students' master academic content. Dr. House insists that "urban poor children must be expected to meet the same high standards as more affluent children"; and

WHEREAS, she is highly revered by the many students and fellow educators who have been inspired by her greatness; it is not easy for her to leave Memphis, but "it is possible to do so knowing that the children are in capable and committed hands"; and

WHEREAS, as a result of her expert leadership, Memphis has received numerous grants and has been chosen as one of only 11 sites in the United States to implement the New American Schools redesign models; and

WHEREAS, Dr. House serves on many national, state, and local boards, including the New American Schools Trustee Board, the Board of Directors of the Educational Testing Service, the Southern Education Foundation Board, the Executive Board of the Council of the Great City Schools, the advisory board of the Harvard Urban Superintendents' Program and the Board of Trustees at both LeMoyne-Owen College and Christian Brothers University; and

WHEREAS, she has been the recipient of numerous awards and accolades, including the AASA National Superintendent of the Year (1999); the Harold W. McGraw, Jr. Prize in Education (1999); Tennessee Superintendent of the Year (1998); The Council of the Great City Schools' Richard R. Green Award for Urban Educators (1998); the Tennessee Education Association Presidential Merit Award; the Communicator of the Year Award given by the Memphis Chapter of the Public Relations Society of America; the Martin Luther King Achievement Award; the Martin Luther King Award for Excellence in Education; the Phi Delta Kappa Leadership Award; the Chapel Hill-Carrboro Chamber of Commerce Educator of the

Year Award; and the Friend of Education Award by the Chapel Hill-Carrboro Association of Educators; and

WHEREAS, she was also selected as “Simply the Best” Chief Executive Officer by the Memphis Black Business Directory in April of 1995, and was twice named the *Executive Educator* magazine’s Top 100 Executive Educators; and

WHEREAS, her many professional accomplishments aside, Dr. Gerry House is most appreciative of the love, support and companionship she shares with her husband Lee A. House, Jr. She is also the mother of two children, Lee, III, and Jennifer; and

WHEREAS, it is most appropriate that this General Assembly should pause in its deliberations to honor this remarkable lady for her immense contributions to the future of Tennessee and our nation; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, That we applaud and express our thanks to Dr. Naomi Geraldine “Gerry” House for laudable service as the Superintendent of the Memphis City Schools and honor her for her profound devotion to her students, fellow educators, and community. We extend to her our best wishes in all her future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.